

Extension Connection

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"UF IFAS Extension Citrus County"



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Extension Notes

New Year, New Knowledge

The word 'new' is typically associated with looking forward, hopeful in anticipation of pleasant experiences. Florida Arbor Day, celebrated on the third Friday each January, highlights the pleasant experience to be had by a stroll amongst the trees (pp. 2-3). Speaking of trees, some species such as pine and maple, are among the many plants from which beneficial plant compounds are derived; learn more about the traditional and contemporary uses of plant compounds on pp. 4-5.

Traditional use of another type of agricultural resource—the Florida Cracker cattle, is featured on p.6. Also prevalent during the Cracker cattle period was canning and other food preservation methods; learn the essentials of water-bath canning on pp. 7-8.

Although Cracker cattle and canning have been around for many lifetimes, the 4-H program continues to be instrumental in passing along new knowledge to youth, knowledge which lasts a lifetime (pp. 9-10). Our Nature Naturally section (11-12) also features a resource that has existed for many lifetimes—soil. Often times taken for granted, soil plays a foundational role in supporting life as we know it.

Be sure to check out additional opportunities for new knowledge in our article on gardening tips (19-20) and at our upcoming events and classes (pp.13-17): Florida-Friendly Landscaping™, Master Gardner Library Series and Living Well FCS seminars, Trash to Treasure (pp.18).

Thanks for sharing with us another great year. Your continued support of the UF/IFAS Extension mission in Citrus County, is sincerely appreciated. We're here to help you find "solutions for your life."

Your Citrus County Extension Team!



UF/IFAS Extension

Solutions for Your Life

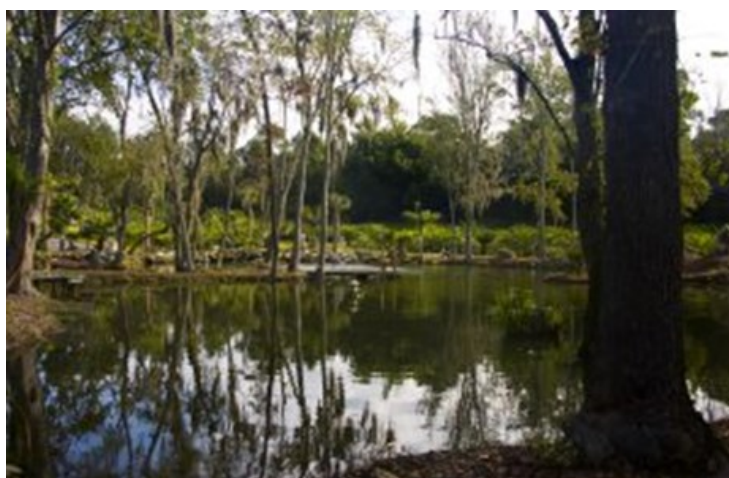
URBAN HORTICULTURE

FLORIDA ARBOR DAY: THE BENEFITS OF URBAN TREES

Marguerite Beckford, Director and Horticulture Agent



If you're like me, then there's a tree in your neighborhood that provides you with a sense of 'grounding' – a connectivity to life's natural rhythm. That sense of connectivity is just one of the many ecosystem services and life-sustaining benefits which trees provide. Community benefits of urban trees include: cleaner air, storm water filtration, flood mitigation, heat-wave temperature moderation, stress-reduction and wellness benefits, carbon sequestration and increased property values.



Cleaner air and water

Research shows that trees contribute to cleaner air in our communities by reducing air pollutants such as carbon dioxide, ozone, particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide and lead. In addition to a mature native tree having the lifetime capacity to store up to 3,000 pounds of carbon equivalent as carbon dioxide, many neighborhoods located close to highways, and factories associated with particulate matter emissions, also rely on trees to act as natural air filters.

Because of their extensive canopies and root systems, mature trees intercept hundreds of gallons of rainfall per year and increase soil's rainfall absorption rate. Both these ecosystem services result in decreasing stormwater pollutants and stormwater runoff volumes. This protects water quality and can decrease the potential for flooding in many neighborhoods.



(Continued on page 3)

UF/IFAS Extension

Solutions for Your Life

URBAN HORTICULTURE

(continued from page 2) *FLORIDA ARBOR DAY: THE BENEFITS OF URBAN TREES*

Health and wealth

Human activities in urban and suburban areas can lead to a phenomenon known as the urban heat island (UHI) effect, where built-up areas often become significantly warmer than surrounding natural areas. Because of the UHI, developed areas can be up to 10 degrees hotter than natural areas.

In addition to helping neighborhood residents feel cooler, trees also help people to “keep their cool.” Research points to the positive effect of trees and green spaces on stress reduction, lower blood pressure levels and people’s ability to cope with ADHD. Although there are different theories on why trees positively impact people’s mental health and wellness, there is overwhelming evidence that the presence of trees and associated green space significantly reduces stress.

Studies also indicate that the presence of trees significantly increases property values. A study published in the *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening* journal indicated that trees within 500 feet of an appraised property increase its sales price by at least 1 percentage point.

Tree-preciation

In many ways, trees play a revitalizing role in our communities, providing or protecting many of the quality-of-life measures we value. So this, and every January as we celebrate Florida Arbor Day, or whenever you next venture outdoors, take a moment to ‘tree-preciate’ all the benefits of your community tree assets.





BENEFICIAL PLANT COMPOUNDS

Steven Davis, FFL Program Coordinator



Plant oils, gums and resins have been collected and utilized by humans for ages. Commonly we think of vegetable oils which are extracted by pressure from plant parts, including seeds. Canola oil, olive oil and margarine are common examples used in cooking. Linseed oil is used to preserve wood and is found as an ingredient in paint products. Turpentine and rosin were harvested in Florida from vast longleaf pine forests and are used as a solvent. At the turn of the twentieth century native pine forests were decimated as American cities were built. As the longleaf pine forest disappeared Tung oil tree was introduced and tung oil production flourished in Florida between 1930 and 1970. Volatile aromatic oils are also extracted from plants, most often through distillation. Peppermint, lavender, and sandalwood are common essential oils.

Gums, not to be confused with sap, are plant compounds which can be found inside plant structures. Most often we recognize exudate gums which ooze from and collect outside a plant. The gum exudate is secreted from inside the plant to cover a wound, inhibiting entry of insects and pathogens, a process called gummosis. Gummosis may also appear as a symptom of bacterial or fungal infestation. Plant sap is the watery fluid utilized to move water and nutrients throughout the plant. Sap has a nutritive function for the plant, where gum and resin do not. Sugar Maple syrup is a sweet sap containing 2% sugar and provides nutrition for those living outside the tree.



Figure 1: Gummosis

(Continued on page 5)

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™

Florida-Friendly Roadmap



(continued from page 4) *BENEFICIAL PLANT COMPOUNDS*

A more notable plant compound produced by plants is resin. Resins are exuded through the bark of cone bearing trees (gymnosperms), like pine. Resins are not soluble in water, viscous and harden when exposed to the air, covering wounds and inhibiting injury, just like plant gum.

Resins have additional properties beneficial to humans. Resins have been utilized in ship building and repair, mummification, fragrances and incense. Un-fossilized aromatic resins like frankincense and myrrh were valuable commodities in ancient times. Fossilized resins like amber were prized for their luster and were used for ornamentation and jewelry, as it is today.



Figure 2: Sugar Maple

Resins flowed out of now extinct trees, similar to today's pine. This resin would emerge and harden, preserving the trees which then fossilize over time. Amber can possess trapped air bubbles increasing its buoyancy at times allowing this fossilized resin to float in fresh water. Deposits of amber may be found in regions away from where the extinct trees once thrived due to its buoyancy. Vegetation capsulized by resin could move by flooding currents to delta areas where sediment would contain and pressure would fossilize the resin creating an attractive colorful lustrous gem, Amber. Fossilized insects and plant parts are often seen embedded in this gem.

Plants are universal in the products they provide. Plant compounds are produced to protect the plant with additional benefits generating economic and aesthetic benefits to societies, both current and ancient.



Figure 3: Amber

FLORIDA CRACKER CATTLE FACTS

Contributor: Ky Sales, MS

Florida Cracker Cattle is considered a heritage breed. Spanish explorers and settlers brought this breed to Florida in the 16th century. They are descendants of the Spanish Andalusian and other Spanish cattle breeds.

Florida Cracker Cattle are well-adapted to the state's challenging climate. They are known for their hardiness and ability to forage for food in the Florida scrub and marshlands.

These cattle are generally small to medium-sized and have a lean and muscular build. They have long, wide horns that curve outward and upward.



Native Florida "cracker" cow. Source: Smathers Archives



Florida Cracker Cattle Association,

Attribution, via Wikimedia Commons

Due to their ability to forage and graze on a wide variety of vegetation, Florida Cracker Cattle are considered environmentally friendly grazers, helping to maintain natural ecosystems.

In 1989, the Florida Cracker Cattle was declared the official state heritage cattle breed of Florida, recognizing its cultural and historical importance.



Preserving the Harvest: A Guide to Water Bath Canning

Stephanie McMinds, Family & Consumer Sciences Agent



Water bath canning is an excellent method to learn, regardless of your experience level with home canning or level of interest in food preservation. The following article will go over the requirements, tools, and safety precautions to make sure your homemade preserves are not only tasty but also secure to consume.

Water Bath Canning: What Is It?

A simple but efficient way to preserve high-acid foods with an acidity level of 4.6 or lower, including fruits, jams, jellies, marmalades, fruit butters, pickles, and salsa, is using a water bath canning method. By immersing jars in a boiling water bath so that at least one inch of boiling water will cover the tops of jars for a certain amount of time, the procedure creates a vacuum seal that inhibits the growth of germs that cause spoiling.



Photo credit: Stephanie Clamer McMinds

Essential Equipment:

1. Canning Jars: Select glass jars with two-piece lid that are suitable for canning. Make sure there are no chips or cracks in the jars.
2. Water Bath Canner: Get a big, aluminum or porcelain-covered steel deep pot that is made just for canning water baths. Deep enough to hold at least 1" of rapidly boiling water above the tops of the jars. Size should not exceed 4" beyond diameter of cooktop element. It should have a rack to keep jars off the bottom.

3. Tools for Canning:

Jar Lifter: Safely raises and lowers hot jars into and out of the water bath.

Lid Lifter: Takes sterile lids out of the warm water.

Funnel: can help you fill jars without making a mess.

Bubble freer and headspace tool: removes the bubbles from the filled jars and measure the Headspace.

4. High-quality Ingredients: For optimal outcomes, choose fresh, premium vegetables. As directed by the recipe, wash and prepare your ingredients.



Photo credit: Stephanie Clamer McMinds

(Continued on page 8)



(continued from page 7) *PRESERVING THE HARVEST: A GUIDE TO WATER BATH CANNING*

Safety First:

1. **Sterilization:** Before using, sterilize tools, lids, and jars. This keeps everything clean and guarantees a safe finished result. Jars will need to be sterilized first by boiling them in hot water for 10 minutes before they're filled, or you can run a cycle in the dishwasher.
2. **Headspace Matters:** To enable appropriate sealing and expansion during processing, adhere to suggested headspace guidelines. Headspace is the space in the top of the jar between the inside of the lid and the top of the food or liquid. If there is too little, food may bubble out or run over during processing. Then deposits on the rim may keep the jar from sealing properly. If there is too much headspace, the food at the top of the jar is likely to discolor during storage, and the jar may not seal because all the air was not forced out.
3. **Processing Time:** Follow the directions on your particular recipe for the processing times. This guarantees that dangerous germs and enzymes are eliminated. Processing times differ based on acidity of food, food density, and size of jar. Too little time may result in food spoilage and too much time may result in an overcooked product.
4. **Altitude Adjustment:** Because water boils at a lower temperature at higher heights, adjust processing timeframes for altitude differences.

Tips for Success:

1. **Have patience:** After processing, remove jars straight up out of the canner and place on a padded surface and let the jars cool naturally, undisturbed for 12-24 hours. Once the lids have sealed, do not touch them or apply force cooling. Check seal - "pop", curved inward, clear ringing sound when tapped. Remove rings and wipe off jars before storing.
2. **Labeling:** To monitor freshness, label your jars with the contents and the date.
3. **Storage:** Keep jars somewhere cool and dark. Verify that lids are properly sealed before eating. Use within 1 year for the best quality.

A satisfying and easy way to preserve the flavors of your garden or local crop is through water bath canning. You can start a year-round path of making delicious homemade treats by adhering to these principles. To preserve the essence of the season, assemble your components, accept the rhythm of the boiling water bath, and enjoy the happiness that comes with it. Happy canning!

For additional resources or to attend one of our hands-on Water Bath Canning classes, contact Stephanie Clamer McMinds or Crysta Reaves at 352-527-5700.



Canning Jars

Use canning jars with a 2 piece lid. A new seal must be used each time. Inspect jars for cracks or rough edges. Discard rims bent or rusted.

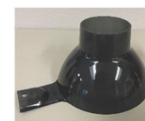
Jar Lifter

Use to properly lift and move hot jars in and out of canner.



Jar Filler

Helps to prevent hot liquid from spilling out when filling jar.



Bubble Freer

One end is used for removing air bubbles from jar. The other end measures headspace.



Lid Wand

Uses a magnet on the end to remove lids from hot water.

Deep Ladle

This is helpful in filling jars with hot liquid in larger quantities at one time.





Florida 4-H Youth Development

Head • Heart • Hands • Health



4-H FOR A LIFETIME Dr. Marnie Ward, 4-H Agent Toni Noaker, 4-H Sr. Prgm. Asst.



“4-H began as a simultaneous response to needs throughout the country, rather than an idea of one individual. The goal of the program was to extend agricultural education to rural youth by organizing boys’ and girls’ clubs through “learning by doing.””

www.florida4h.ifas.ufl.edu

In the 4-H community, members are encouraged to use their head to clearer thinking, heart to greater loyalty, hands to higher service and health to better living, for their clubs, communities, country and world. This 4-H pledge is made at the beginning of every meeting. Here, in Citrus County, there are thirteen 4-H clubs offering opportunities to youth. Each club has adult leaders and youth members, meeting monthly or weekly, working together to achieve goals they have set.



Many of the clubs in Citrus County have a generational legacy for families. For parents and family members, the skills “learned by doing” stay with them into adulthood. As a 4-H newbie, I joined the 4-H office in July, 2023, and I have learned so much about this program in just these few short months. Former 4-H members have shared stories with me. Let me tell you about the “septic guy” who was a member of the Red Level 4-H club. He swore he would not have made it through school if he didn’t have to keep up his grades to be a bull rider in the Red Level Rodeo. He said that Ms. Marnie helped him through 4-H to become a successful adult. I later saw him on the news after the tornado-strikes in Crystal River with a chainsaw, helping to clear out downed trees. The commitment to community still thrives with him.



Ms. Rita Bosse, a Citrus County resident for 50 years, called the Citrus Extension office to voice a concern, that she had not seen any mention in the newspaper about 4-H Sewing Clubs and she knew that needed to change. Having belonged to a 4-H sewing club in her youth, she wanted to ensure the experiences and skills she learned in 4-H were available for the next generation. This article is a response to that request for more attention to be brought to 4-H sewing clubs.

Ms. Rita shared that her own mother did not sew or even own a sewing machine, until Rita and her sister joined 4-H. Ms. Rita learned to sew clothing and curtains, and as a teen she realized she could “do things other people couldn’t”. Rita started in 4-H in second grade and continued through age 15. When she was in the second grade her group leader was Mrs. Kohoal and they met at her home. “In addition to sewing, projects, I remember I always picked the project books that were about childcare because I had 5 siblings that I watched” Rita recalls. She fondly remembers the fashion shows that 4-H offered. *(Continued on page 10)*



Florida 4-H Youth Development

Head • Heart • Hands • Health



(continued from page 9) 4-H FOR A LIFETIME

she gained confidence teaching others when she made presentations and gave instructions in 4-H. The skills she learned, provided her the confidence to teach her own home economics teacher how to thread a sewing machine. When Rita became an adult, the experiences of teaching at District Events and the confidence she gained in presenting at the capital in Tallahassee, helped her pursue a career as a teacher. She worked for many years at Pleasant Grove Elementary School in Inverness.



As the years passed, Rita realized those life skills learned in 4-H grew “first as a child, then as a wife, mother, and teacher”. Her sewing skills, learned in 4-H, propelled Rita to create priceless family treasures that recognized important milestones throughout her life, “I made my bridesmaids dresses, my children’s baptism gowns, quilts and curtains”. Rita has held on to the pledge she made in second grade and continues to volunteer in the community; as a Reading Pal to the Pre-K children in Citrus County schools and at various non-profits. She enjoys judging for the 4-H public speaking contest and she continues to sew baby quilts for a local pregnancy group. Rita still goes to the county fair to promote the 4-H members every year “I feel it is valuable to contribute still as an adult”.

4-H sewing clubs continue to build confidence in our 4-H youth, just as they did 70-plus years ago. Through 4-H projects, youth develop an appreciation of working toward goals, and a commitment to excellence and community service. These virtues produce productive and conscientious members of the community. Let me introduce you to Ms. Allison, a 13-year old member of the 4-H Cre8 sewing club. Allison has participated in sewing clubs, sewing camps, and in her words “was lucky enough to lead the Pledge of Allegiance at the Convention of Fairs Meeting”. For Allison she has learned through 4-H “patience, because you’re always going to make some mistakes and you have to go back and fix the mistakes, and also big projects take a lot of time”. She has enjoyed sharing the projects she makes with her family and friends. She considers her 4-H sewing club to have provided her with a “really cool skill and it has made me more comfortable speaking in public”. She gets to use her head when “calculating how much material you need for a specific pattern, when cutting fabric correctly, learning how to use the sewing machine, threading the bobbin, troubleshooting when the machine acts up and not to let your fingers get too close to the needle”.



The legacy of 4-H is evident in the service of alumni and continues to grow in 4-H members every day. The positive life lessons learned through 4-H stay with them for a lifetime. Ms. Rita recalled, “When I was in 4-H the fair had prizes for the ribbon winners; although I didn’t win, I remember the blue was 25 cents, the red 10 cents and the white 5 cents.” For Ms. Rita, there were no ribbons awarded, but she earned something worth more than the 25-cent prize. She learned many life skills, confidence in herself, a dedication to community, and a determination to work toward her goals.

Nature Naturally

SOILS ARE MORE THAN DIRT

For 2024, Nature Naturally will be digging in the ~~dirt~~ soil to explore the origins and dynamic processes required for sustainable systems.



Life depends on a thin layer of material that stretches across the globe. It provides an anchor for plants and trees, transports nutrients, filters water, and is the environment for farmers to grow the crops that feed the world. You guessed it...

SOIL

What is Soil?

Soil is a mixture of minerals, organic matter, water, and air (Figure 1). It is formed by the weathering of parent rock but may also originate from the breakdown of organic materials (leaves, debris, etc.). Weathering of parent materials is a gradual process and requires physical (water and wind), chemical (hydration or leaching), or biological (microorganisms and plant roots) processes. The process of soil formation takes time, estimates are from 500 – 1,000 years. This formation is faster in warm, humid climates and slower in cool, dry climates. This is one factor responsible for the abundant topsoil in Florida's panhandle.

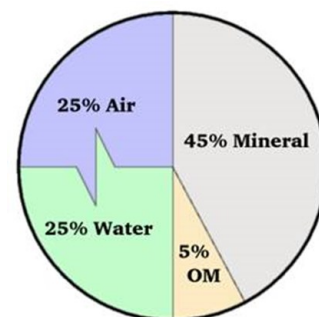
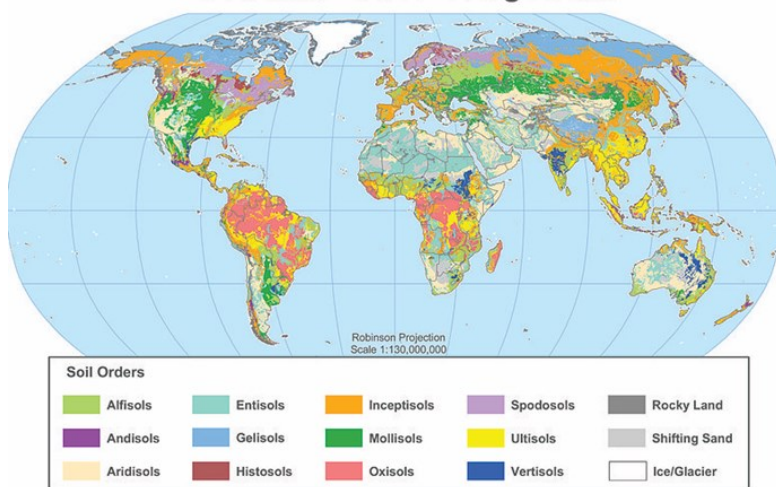


Figure 1: Soil components credit University of Hawaii.

Global Soil Regions



With the variety of parent materials and climates (rainfall and temperature) globally, different soils form in different geographic areas. Soil scientists divide these soils into 12 orders, and they are:



US Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources
Conservation Service

Soil Survey Division
World Soil Resources
soils.usda.gov/use/worldsoils

November 2005

Figure 2: Global distribution of soil regions credit USDA

(Continued on page 12)

Nature Naturally

(continued from page 11) SOILS ARE MORE THAN DIRT

Soil Orders

Alfisol (FL)
Andisol
Aridisol
Entisol (FL)
Gelisol
Histosol (FL)
Inceptisol (FL)
Mollisol (FL)
Oxisol
Spodosol (FL)
Ultisol (FL)
Vertisol



Figure 3: Distribution of 7 soil orders in Florida credit University of Florida

Seven of these soil orders are found in Florida (Alfisol, Entisol, Histosol, Inceptisol, Mollisol, Spodosol, and Ultisol). The histosols are found south of Lake Okeechobee. The soils in this area are rich in organic matter and ideally suited for agriculture.

Educational Resources

The Soil Science Society of America has developed a wealth of educational resources for grades K – 12, but there is no age limit on learning something new. Soil is an essential resource and good stewardship requires everyone take an active role in promoting sustainability. Their website and further information can be found, here:

<https://www.soils4kids.org/>

For the “littles” (K-2) visit the coloring and activity book found here:

www.soils.org/files/iys/iys-colorbook-for-web.pdf

What’s on the Horizon?

Check back with Nature Naturally in April to learn more about the soils in Florida and the Florida State Soil, Myakka Fine Sand.

Gardening Seminar:

Classes are held at Extension Services—register at link

<https://ccufflprogram.eventbrite.com> or Call 352-527-5708



**"Right Plant,
Right Place"**

Tuesday January 09
2:00 - 4:00 pm

**"9 Florida-Friendly
Principles"**

Tuesday January 23
2:00 - 4:00 pm

**"Florida-Friendly
Fertilizing"**

Tuesday February 06
2:00 - 4:00 pm

**"Honeybees and
Pollinators"**

Tuesday February 13
2:00—4:00 pm

**"Lawns in Central
Florida"**

Tuesday March 05
2:00 - 4:00 pm

**"Palms in Central
Florida"**

Tuesday March 19
2:00 - 4:00 pm

Do you need more information about irrigation?

There are seminars scheduled Thursday February 22:

"Irrigation & Turf Management 101" Noon to 3pm or

Thursday, March 14: "Fixing Flaws in your Landscape" 6 to 8pm

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday April 20, 2024
10am - 1pm

Citrus County Extension Office
3650 W. Sovereign Path, Lecanto
352-527-5700



Trained service animals only please

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JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH



Monthly Extension Master Gardener Seminars

Programs offer an opportunity to explore timely garden topics at these seminars offered at each Citrus County Library. No registration required for in person seminars. All programs start at 1 pm, last approximately 1 hour, and are **free**.

ZOOM seminar: pre-register on our Facebook page for the secure link.

January: Monthly Guide to Gardening

February: Weeds: Why We Can't Love Them

March: Mixed Media Lawns

2nd Wednesday	Central Ridge Library	Beverly Hills
3rd Wednesday	Floral City Library	Floral City
1st Monday	Lakes Regional Library	Inverness
2nd Thursday	Citrus Springs Library	Citrus Springs
4th Thursday	Homosassa Library	Homosassa
4th Monday	Coastal Regional	Crystal River
3rd Monday	ZOOM —Pre-register on our Facebook page!	

Bring plant problems and questions for expert advice to the Extension office.

Trained Master Gardeners are available most days between 8am - 5pm.

Schedules can vary, so please call ahead (352-527-5700).

Additionally, challenges (pictures are helpful) can be emailed to:

IF-SVC-citrusMG@ad.ufl.edu

Honey beekeeping basics



Basic beekeeping 101

Is beekeeping right for me?

Saturday, January 27, 2024 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM



Basic beekeeping 201

Honeybees and bee health

Saturday, February 17, 2024 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM



Basic beekeeping 301

Honey hive management

Saturday, March 23, 2024 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM



Go here to register: <https://ccufflprogram.eventbrite.com>

**Citrus County Extension Office
3650 W Sovereign Path, Ste 1
Lecanto FL 34461
352-527-5708**

Citrus County Family & Consumer Sciences Upcoming Programs

- **January 11th - Fall Prevention at Homosassa Library (10:30 AM)**
Attendees will learn the risk factors of falling and ways to reduce those risks.
- **January 18th - Cooking Under Pressure at Canning Center (5:00 PM)**
This HANDS-ON class will cover: different electric pressure cooker and air fryer models, appliance features, safety tips, additional equipment you can purchase, and tricks to make cooking a breeze. Participants will make a meal in an electric pressure cooker or air fryer and enjoy a meal together. Cost: \$15.00 all supplies included.
- **January 22nd and 29th—Adult Culinary Series at Canning Center (10:00 AM-1:00 PM)**
This hands-on class will cover: the process of cheesemaking, pasta making, soups, salads, proper kitchen safety, and basic culinary skills. Participants will make global cuisine themed recipes and enjoy a meal together. Cost: \$30.00 all supplies included.
- **January 22nd and 29th—Adult Culinary Series at Canning Center (4:00 PM-7:00 PM)**
This hands-on class will cover: the process of cheesemaking, pasta making, soups, salads, proper kitchen safety, and basic culinary skills. Participants will make global cuisine themed recipes and enjoy a meal together. Cost: \$30.00 all supplies included.
- **January 22nd– March 13th - Tai Chi at UF/IFAS Extension Office (11:00 AM)**
Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention is a 8 week course that is designed to relieve pain, reduce falls and improves quality of life. This class is held on Monday and Wednesdays starting January 22nd until March 13th from 11:00AM- 12:00PM. Classes are held twice a week for 8 weeks for 1 hour.
- **January 24th– March 13th - A Matter of Balance at UF/IFAS Extension Office (1:00 PM)**
A Matter of Balance is designed to reduce the fear of falling and increase activity levels among older adults. Participants learn to set realistic goals to increase activity, change their environment to reduce fall risk factors, and learn simple exercises to increase strength and balance. This class is held on Wednesdays, starting January 24th until March 13th from 1:00PM-3:00PM. Classes are held once a week for 8 weeks for 2 hours.

For more information or to register for one of the programs above
visit: <https://tinyurl.com/bdfpjt6v> or call (352) 527-5700



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Citrus County Family & Consumer Sciences Upcoming Programs

- **February 5th - For Hire Charter Captains and Fishing Guides Workshop at Citrus County Chamber (8:30 AM– 4:00PM)**

This workshop is to provide assistance and training on a variety of topics such as business planning, fisheries science and management, best practices for fish handling, natural resources, legal issues, and/or water safety. Cost: \$35.00 all supplies included.

- **February 12th - Growing and Cooking with Herbs at Floral City Library (1:00 PM)**

Through this free program discover flavorful culinary herbs well-suited for Citrus County gardens and how to incorporate them to create tasty meals.

- **February 17th– Water Bath Canning: Bell Peppers at Canning Center (10:00 AM)**

Learn the process of water bath canning safely by making pickled bell peppers at this hands-on class. Cost: \$15.00 all supplies included.

- **February 26th– Water Bath Canning: Bell Peppers at Canning Center (10:00 AM)**

Learn the process of water bath canning safely by making pickled bell peppers at this hands-on class. Cost: \$15.00 all supplies included.

- **March 11th– Cooking for 1 or 2 at Lakes Region Library (10:30 AM)**

Through this free program can show how easy it is to plan, shop for, and prepare meals for one or two. There will also be a cooking demonstration to show how easy it can be.

- **March 13th– Water Bath Canning: Peach Jam at Canning Center (10:00 AM)**

Learn the process of water bath canning safely by making peach jam at this hands-on class. Cost: \$15.00 all supplies included.

- **March 16th– Water Bath Canning: Peach Jam at Canning Center (11:00 AM)**

Learn the process of water bath canning safely by making peach jam at this hands-on class. Cost: \$15.00 all supplies included.

- **March 22nd– Dinner and a Movie at Canning Center (5:00 PM)**

This program will teach your family to make a quick, and easy meal while enjoying a movie when you eat. Cost: \$5.00 per person.

For more information or to register for one of the programs above visit: <https://tinyurl.com/bdfpjt6v> or call (352) 527-5700



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TRASH

to

TREASURE

2024 Recycled Art Contest



All entries on display: April 8 - April 19

Check out the art, then vote for your favorite entry
(1 vote per person). Voting ends at noon April 20.

***Application
Deadline:
March 29***

Winners and prizes announced:

- Extension Earth Day celebration
- Saturday, April 20 at 12:00pm

For more info call: 352-527-5700

Promoting art and recycling through the use of recyclable/
recycled materials, Citrus County residents can compete for
cash awards donated by corporate and individual sponsors
within our community.

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Winter Gardening Calendar

While your northern friend's plants are mostly bare this time of year, there is a startling array of color in the Citrus County landscape. Think beyond the ubiquitous azalea, with an expanded plant palette of winter bloomers.

Trees and shrubs: Camellia, star magnolia, maple in bloom, firespike, and the vibrant Chickasaw plum and fringe-tree.

Star Magnolia



Annuals/perennials: Yellow jasmine vine, petunia, Angelonia, pansy, sweet alyssum, and diamond frost Euphorbia.

Winter vegetable gardens are at peak during the winter with tons of herbs, lots of leafy greens, many root vegetables (carrot, turnip, and beet), and all the 'cole' crops of broccoli, cabbage, and Brussel sprouts.

Protect plants on coldest nights. When especially cold nights are predicted, be ready to cover tender plants to minimize damage. Frost and freezes are likely this quarter.

Coverings can include blankets, boxes, upturned garbage cans, just not plastic. Protection is only offered if the covers go all the way to the ground to trap evaporating ground heat. Also, it is important to note that potted plants and newly planted garden gems are more susceptible to damage in their first year in the ground.



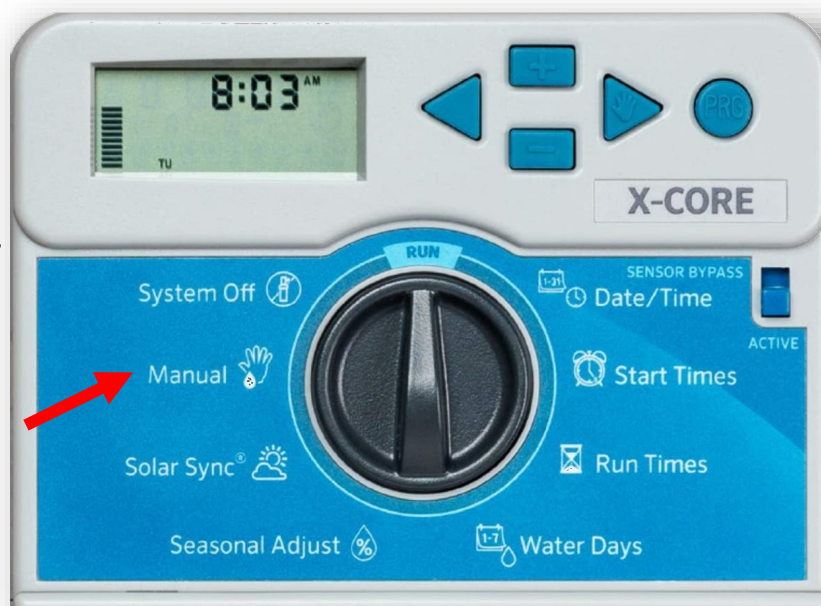
Make sure that the cover extends all the way to the ground to trap radiant

Don't follow the strawberry growers all-night vigil with a sprinkler system running as seen on TV news. This is not for the faint of heart; home irrigation systems are not designed to run during a hard freeze. A little water is worse for plant survival than no water.

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Turf: You may have noticed that the grass is growing more slowly (Yay, to less frequent mowing!). Turf also has reduced ability to utilize irrigation and fertilizers. Irrigation should occur no more frequently than once every 10-14 days in winter. If it has rained $\frac{1}{2}$ " or more, then no irrigation is needed for another 10 days or so. Turn the irrigation system to 'Manual' and turn it on only when it has been dry for prolonged periods.



Roses: Prune roses late in Feb or early March and apply mulch to maintain a 2-3" layer. Blooms begin in about 8 weeks, just in time for spring-break visitors.

Weeds, weeds, weeds. Apply a pre-emergent herbicide around the middle of Feb to help prevent warm season weeds from sprouting. Once you do, don't disturb the soil or it can inactivate the weed fighter.

For specific gardening information, be sure to contact us - 352-527-5700